SARL NEWS SUNDAY 12 DECEMBER 2004

You are listening to Amateur Radio Station ZS6SRL of the South African Radio League, the National society for Amateur Radio in South Africa, with a news bulletin that is broadcast every Sunday at 08:15 Central Africa Time (CAT) in Afrikaans and at 08:30 CAT in English.

This bulletin is also available on the website of the SARL at www.sarl.org.za, on packet bulletin boards and on echolink from Chris, ZS6FCS.

In the news today.

PRETORIA RADIO AMATEUR REWARDED FOR ASSISTING THE BLIND

RADIO AMATEUR OF THE YEAR AWARDS ANNOUNCED

SARL IARU FUND NEARLY THERE

RESULTS OF THE PEARS VHF DIGITAL CONTEST FOR 2004 ANNOUNCED

Stay tuned for more detail on these and other news items. Also, at your convenience, visit the SARL Web site or call the SARL office, which is open on weekdays from 09:00 to 13:00, at 011 675 2393 for details on how to join, book sales and all related amateur radio activities.

Having said this we must however bring to the attention of all subscribers and listeners that the SARL office will be closed during this holiday season from 15 December to 7 January. We trust Vee will enjoy this little break.

SARL NEWS invites clubs and individuals to submit news items of interest to amateurs on the web site of the SARL, which is www.sarl.org.za/newsinbox.asp not later than the Thursday preceding the bulletin date. It would be appreciated if you could do it in both Afrikaans and English.

You are listening to ZS6SRL the news follows in detail.

PRETORIA RADIO AMATEUR REWARDED FOR ASSISTING THE BLIND

Nico du Toit, ZR6AFJ, was awarded the Amateur Radio Community Service Award for the development of a device that turns antenna measurements into audible speech.

He identified the need for such a device to enable visually impaired radio amateurs to enjoy their activity to the full, including experimentation and optimising of antenna performance. The audio adapted standing wave ratio measurement bridge is an essential device to ensure optimum signal transfer from the transmitter to the antenna. In this way a visually handicapped person does not only prevent damage to the transmitter, but also prevents the transmissions from causing harmful interference to other users of the spectrum.

The South African Amateur Radio Development Trust introduced the new award to encourage meaningful community service, which could include a project like Nico delivered, or communication support at a sporting event or disaster communication. The award will be bestowed annually.

RADIO AMATEUR OF THE YEAR AWARDS ANNOUNCED

Two Radio Amateurs were recognised for their contribution to the Amateur Radio Service (Ham Radio) at a presentation held in Johannesburg on 8 December. The annual event which is sponsored by Siemens is hosted by the South African Amateur Radio Development Trust.

The senior award was presented to Andrew Roos, ZS1AN, from Cape Town for his work on digital High Frequency (HF) radio. Earlier this year he demonstrated how voice could be digitised and transmitted on a narrow band HF channel, typical less than 3 kHz.

Speech is converted into compressed digital data by a voice codec (voice encoder/decoder). The compressed digital signal is converted to an audio signal by a modem. The audio output modulates the single side band signal of a conventional transmitter. On the receive side the process is reversed and the audio is recovered.

Digital voice for HF has some distinct advantages over ordinary analogue voice. It is capable of very high SNR (50 dB) over channels with only fair SNR (20 dB). Speech bandwidth can exceed transmitted bandwidth and error correction reduces the impact of static, multi-path and fading.

Andrew said that there are some disadvantages, which he believes will be overcome. He said that it is necessary to reintroduce some noise at the receive end to make the audio sound more natural. He also believes that more advanced codecs will come onto the market as commercial use of digital voice increases.

The award recognises the contribution Andrew is making to the promotion of research and development in Amateur Radio giving true meaning to the ITU definition: "Amateur Radio is a service for the purpose of self training and technical investigation."

The Young Radio Amateur of the Year Award was presented to a 15-year-old learner from Westville in KwaZulu-Natal, Edrich de Lange, ZR5TUX.

Edrich obtained his amateur radio license earlier this year and has shown a particular interest in the technology side of Amateur Radio. At the award presentation he said: "I once read that you know you are a ham if you've grabbed a soldering iron the wrong way, well I've done that… a few times. My favourite thing about radios is the electronics. It is always fun to see what happens when one does something new or just the excitement of seeing your own creation do something, or just see it work."

Edrich said that amateur radio has changed his life. Before he became involved in radio he wanted to become either a chef or a computer engineer. "Now I've

got my mind set on becoming an electronics engineer. It has made me appreciate electronic apparatus even more than I did before."

Rolf Spaeth of Siemens presented the awards. In congratulating the two recipients he said that every year he is amazed at the technology radio amateurs get involved in. He said that it is in particular gratifying to see the involvement of young people which augers well for the future of the communications and electronics industry. He said that Siemens will continue the sponsorship of the awards as the company believes in encouraging innovation and development of technology in amateur radio. Siemens is a sponsor member of the South African Radio League.

SARLNEWS wishes to make use of this opportunity to thank the recipients of the three awards for that what each of you contributed, and will continue to contribute, to the development of the radioo communication technique and the furthering of amateur radio. We are sure that you out and out deserved the awards. Thanks also to all the other entrants, your work is also appreciated.

SARL IARU FUND NEARLY THERE

The SARL IARU fund is close to its target thanks to donations from clubs and individual radio amateurs. This week our thanks go to Alf Joubert, ZR6ABA, Rad Radford, ZS5RK, ZR5SEP and The Coalfields Amateur Radio Club. Some donations were paid into the SARL account and may not all have been transferred. Watch next week's SARL News for more details and the final amount that was contributed. Details will also be posted on the web. Donations can be paid into the SA Amateur Radio Development Trust, ABSA Menlyn account 560 142 722 Branch code 335 645. Please email details to armi@sarl.org or fax to 012 991 5651.

RESULTS OF THE PEARS VHF DIGITAL CONTEST FOR 2004:

The PEARS Contest Committee is pleased to announce the results of the PEARS VHF Digital Contest held earlier this year.

There were a disappointing number of logs submitted, but good tallies were nonetheless posted; the results, with points scored, are as follows:

Terrestrial Single Operator: 1. ZS1AGF 58 026; 2. ZS6ANZ 30 383; 3. ZS5Y 26 225.

Terrestrial Multi-Operator : 1. ZS4SRK 44 234.

EME: 1. ZS5LEE 1 815 649; 2. ZS5Y 476 166.

Congratulations to the winners, and thanks to all who submitted logs.

POSTPONEMENT OF PEARS "WELCOME TO HF" QSO PARTY

Due to the unfortunate failure of the DoC to fulfil it's written undertaking regarding the gazetting of the new Regulations, the PEARS Committee has no choice but to postpone the planned PEARS Welcome to HF QSO Party

scheduled for this weekend. A new date will be announced once the Regulations are ultimately gazetted.

The PEARS Committee regrets this situation, but wishes to stress that this is due to circumstances totally out of the control of both PEARS and the SARL. We apologise for this unfortunate situation.

PROPAGATION CONDITIONS

Propagation conditions have now reached an unavoidable low. Yet on Tuesday there were a few good openings towards the east, but of very short duration. Conditions were very weak during the past week with usually no activities on the DX bands. On Thursday the sunspot number was only 19,9 as against last week's 56,7. Sun activity was very low. Thundery weather over large areas of the country also had its effect. Bill Johnston, K5ZI, a specialist in thundery weather, of Mexico, recently lost almost all of his equipment as a result of a direct hit despite his installation being protected and earthed according to the book and all his feeder and power cables being disconnected!

DIARY OF EVENTS

19 December, President's Net at 19:00; 9 April 2005 SARL AGM.

The SARL invites you to listen to Amateur Radio Mirror International on 17 700, 9 750, and 7 082 kHz and 145,625 MHz in East London, 145,650 in Durban 145,750 MHz in Pretoria and 438,800 in the Sandton area. A repeat broadcast can be heard on Mondays at 21:00 CAT on 3 215 kHz.

Telkom and Sentech sponsor ARMI.

This then brings us to the end of today's bulletin, which was compiled by George, ZS6NE, and read by …….from…… as a service to radio amateurs, short wave listeners and electronic enthusiasts.

You have been listening to ZS6SRL and thank you for having joined us. Also many thanks to those persons who supply news for our bulletins and the amateurs who relay the bulletins so regularly.

Goodbye everyone.

/EX